

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6849

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0742

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG MP US
SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: REQUEST FOR MULTILATERAL
INFORMATION ON HOST GOVERNMENTS

REF: (A) STATE 159747; (B) 76 PORT LOUIS 295

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MULTILATERAL BEHAVIOR OF MAURITIUS
THAT WERE PRESENTED IN REF B STILL PERTAIN TODAY EXCEPT FOR THE
FOLLOWING POINTS:

- A. MAURITIUS DID SEEK AND OBTAINED THE UNSC SEAT.
- B. MAURITIUS BROKE RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL JUST BEFORE OAU
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING IN JUNE OF 1976, PROBABLY BECAUSE
IT DID NOT WANT TO BE CONSPICUOUS BY NOT HAVING DONE SO, AS
PRACTICALLY ALL OTHER AFRICAN STATES HAVE.
- C. MAURITIUS HAS BECOME MORE INTERESTED IN AFRICAN ISSUES
IN THE PAST YEAR, PARTLY BECAUSE OF PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM'S
JOB AS OAU CHAIRMAN, AND PARTLY UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE
OPPOSITION PARTY, THE MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT (MMM), WHICH
PURSUES A POLICY OF SUPPORTING THE MOST RADICAL POSITIONS OF THE
MOST RADICAL AFRICAN STATES.
- D. AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL VOTING
BEHAVIOR OF MAURITIUS IS ITS ADHERENCE TO THE RULE THAT IF THERE
IS AN OUA CONSENSUS ON AN ISSUE, THEN IT IS BOUND TO VOTE WITH
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- THE OAU BLOC. ON QUESTIONS SURROUNDING THE MIDDLE EAST AND
ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUES, THE OAU (AND THUS MAURITIUS) WILL
GENERALLY SIDE WITH THE ARAB BLOC, EVEN THOUGH THE GOM MAY NOT
BE CONVINCED OF THE MORAL OR LEGAL CORRECTNESS OF THE ARAB
POSITION. ITS VOTE AT THE RECENT ILC IN GENEVA WAS GUIDED
BY THIS FORMULA.
- E. SIR HAROLD WALTER BECAME FOREIGN MINISTER AFTER REF B

WAS WRITTEN. HE HAS SINCE TAKEN SOME OF THE BURDEN OFF PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM IN THIS AREA, BUT NOT MUCH HAS CHANGED IN TERMS OF INSTRUCTIONS TO MAURITIAN DELEGATIONS AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES. MAURITIUS' PERMREP AT THE U.N., RAMPHUL, IS STILL FREE-WHEELING, OFTEN FOLLOWING HIS OWN PERSONAL PREDISPOSITIONS RATHER THAN HIS GOVERNMENT'S.

F. MAURITIUS IS TODAY PROBABLY LESS INFLUENCED BY THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES BECAUSE GOM LEADERS DO NOT KNOW THE NEW, POST-GANDHI LEADERS IN DELHI AND DON'T HAVE CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE GOI ANY LONGER. THIS MAY CHANGE OVER TIME. BUT AT THE MOMENT THERE IS NOT MUCH COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. (THE INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER DEPARTED IN JANUARY AND HAS NOT BEEN REPLACED YET.)

G. THE MAURITIAN POSITION ON ANGOLA, THAT IS, ITS SPEEDY RECOGNITION OF THE MPLA, SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN AN ABERRATION. THIS WAS NOT CONSISTENT WITH ITS OVERALL POSTURE TOWARDS AFRICA, AND IT HAS NOT REPEATED THAT "ERROR." BY CONTRAST THIS YEAR RAMGOOLAM, AS OAU CHAIRMAN, STRONGLY SUPPORTED MOBUTU IN HIS CONFLICT WITH ANGOLA AT TIME OF KATANGAN GENDARME INVASION OF SHABA. "ERROR" ON ANGOLA WAS PROBABLY CAUSED BY LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF ANGOLAN INTERNAL SITUATION AND A KNEE-JERK REACTION TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT THERE ON THE SIDE OF THE ANTI-MPLA FACTIONS.

2. AS FOR TACTICS, WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING TO ADVISE:

(A) FOR A GOVERNMENT LIKE THIS ONE, WE SHOULD PROBABLY LIMIT OUR APPROACHES TO THE THREE TO FIVE KEY ISSUES
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ON WHICH WE MOST NEED ITS HELP SINCE THE GOM'S TOLERANCE FOR DEMARCHES AND ITS LEADERS' ATTENTION SPANS ARE NOT SUFFICIENT TO BEAR HEAVIER TRAFFIC. WHILE INSTRUCTIONS WE RECEIVE ARE WELL-DRAFTED AND TO THE POINT, THEY SHOULD ALSO BE KEPT AS SHORT AS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE ATTENTION SPAN PROBLEM. DEPARTMENT SHOULD ALSO REALIZE THAT ALMOST ALL APPROACHES HERE MUST BE MADE TO THE PRIME MINISTER OR TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER (AND IN A FEW CASES TO THE PERMANENT SECRETARY OF THE FORMIN). THIS AGAIN OPERATES TO LIMIT OUR APPROACHES SINCE ONLY SO MUCH TIME CAN BE DEMANDED OF THESE THREE OFFICIALS.

(B) OUR APPROACHES ON IMPORTANT ISSUES SHOULD BE MADE WITH AMPLE LEAD TIME IN ORDER TO PERMIT GOM TO INSTRUCT ITS DELEGATION IF IT SO DECIDES. IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED, HOWEVER, THAT ITS DELEGATIONS RARELY RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS, AND MOST ARE GIVEN PLENTY OF LEEWAY TO DECIDE HOW TO VOTE ON THE SPOT. THUS, FOLLOW-UP APPROACHES BY US DELEGATIONS AT A CONFERENCE ITSELF SHOULD BE MADE AS A MATTER OF COURSE TO SUPPLEMENT WHAT EMBASSY MAY HAVE DONE IN PORT LOUIS.

(C) AND FINALLY, WHENEVER THE GOM DELEGATION VOTES RIGHT ON AN ISSUE OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO US, IT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE A MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM A SUITABLY HIGH-LEVEL USG OFFICIAL

TO DELIVER TO GOM, TO REASSURE THEM THAT WE OBSERVED WHAT
THEY DID AND APPRECIATED IT.

3. DCM RICHARD BROWN IS DESIGNATED MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS
OFFICER.
KEELEY

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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